

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

More than five years have passed since this country suffered one of its greatest tragedies on September 11, 2001. On that day, the Congress vowed to the American people that we would do all in our power and take all necessary actions to ensure that this nation was as prepared as possible to deter any future terrorist attack. To help better understand what had gone wrong and where corrections were needed, the Congress authorized the 9/11 Commission to examine how this tragedy occurred. In its report, the Commission explained in great detail our failures, offering great insight into the problems which existed in 2001. In addition, it provided advice on what could be done to remedy the situation.

In response to the 9/11 tragedy and in accord with the Commission's report, the Congress passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act in 2004. The Act took a giant step in addressing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and fixing problems, but we recognize that in some areas, additional actions were required to meet the objectives and spirit of the 9/11 Commission.

As the leaders of the Intelligence and Appropriations Committees in the Senate, we studied the 9/11 Commission's work and recommendations on intelligence oversight with extreme care. We supported the reforms which were enacted in the 2004 Act, and we worked with you to change Senate rules to strengthen the Intelligence Committee. The Senate abolished Committee term limits. It mandated the hiring of staff to serve each Committee member, and it significantly increased the autonomy of the Committee. Furthermore, we recognized that even these reforms, while extremely important to congressional reform, were not enough.

Both of our Committees have taken steps to significantly improve our oversight since 2001. We have both hired additional staff to review intelligence programs and funding. We conduct more frequent hearings and briefings in order to thoroughly review ongoing and prospective intelligence activities. We delve into intelligence issues in greater detail. In short, we have significantly broadened our oversight.

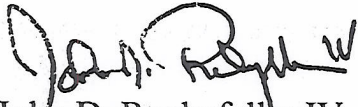
We recognize that, even having adopted significant changes, we could still do a better job of working together to share information and knowledge and incorporate the best ideas of both committees into our work. As such, the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committee on Appropriations, and the Subcommittee on Defense, have entered into a memorandum of agreement to ensure that we will work even closer together in the future.

The memorandum states our commitment to allow our staffs to share information more fully, and to monitor the activities of each other's Committee. In addition, it provides that the Chairman and Ranking Member of each Committee will be given opportunity to provide their views to the other Committee regarding the proposals and planned recommendations in each other's mark ups.

The course we recommend ensures that the Senate will maintain necessary checks and balances in its intelligence budget recommendations through the independent authorization and appropriations reviews. It guarantees that many of the most senior members of the Senate are included in the intelligence oversight process. At the same time it lets both Committees benefit from the knowledge and expertise of the other Committee.

We believe the adoption of this memorandum of agreement will put our Committees on a path of greater cooperation and understanding and provide the Senate with the most effective oversight of intelligence.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence



Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations



Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense



Ted Stevens
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense